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ABSTRACT

Differences between the experiences and perceptions of male and female educational administration professors are examined in this comparative study, which focuses on perceptions of how they obtained their positions and the factors for securing them. Data from a mailed questionnaire of 100 male educational administration professors, which produced a 58% response rate, were compared with findings from the 1990 survey of 121 female counterparts. Findings indicate little change in the ways in which recent and senior hires, both male and female, obtained their positions. Inadvertent and unconscious bias against women was evidenced in the male-dominated practices of student brokering and social networking. Men and women identified similar overall factors for their employment but assigned them different importance; the job interview and individual credentials were perceived as the most influential factors by women and men, respectively. The fact that men's and women's perceptions were more similar than different suggests that they face similar "realities" and that selection criteria appear to transcend differences of gender, experience, timing, and institution. Two tables are included. (18 references) (LMI)

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MALE AND FEMALE PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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MALE AND FEMALE PROFESSORS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

At all levels of the enterprise, educational administration has long been male-associated, if not male-identified. Since the fifties, when educational administration programs became an "accepted field of graduate education" (McCarthy, 1987, 2), those who prepare educational administrators, professors of educational administration, have been equally male-identified. Professors of educational administration are, even today, typically and overwhelmingly male (and white) and more, rather than less, male dominated when compared to faculty across the disciplines (McCarthy, 1987). The recent movement of females into the educational administration professoriate, a field in which past barriers to their entrance and advancement have been well documented (Bernard, 1964; Epstein, 1970; Finkelstein, 1984; Gappa and Uehling, 1979; Kritek, 1984; Menges and Exum, 1983; Sandler, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987; Tolbert, 1986), has lead to considerable interest in the relative status of females and males in the profession and to questions about whether or not their perceptions and experiences are comparable.

Given the history of the field, it is not surprising that the very question of gender in the educational administrative professoriate, no less in school administration, was little raised until the 1970's. Then, concerns for equity and civil rights, on a national scale, made the relative absence of diversity in the field (racial, ethnic, and gender), both more visible and more questionable.

In the first comprehensive study of professors of educational administration, Campbell and Newell (1973) reported that 24 (2%) of their 1,333 respondents were female. However, they did not use gender as a variable in examining any other aspects of the professoriate. Fourteen years later, McCarthy, et.al (1988), replicated and extended the Campbell and Newell study, providing comparative information about professors of educational administration. In this study, gender was used as a variable of analysis, making comparisons between male and female professors possible.

McCarthy, et. al (1988), reported a dramatic increase in the per cent of female professors, from 2% in 1972 to 12% in 1986. They reported that 135 (10.2%) of their 1,302 respondents were female, although only

90 represented educational administration (K-12 related). The discrepancy in per cent was a result of differences between the number of respondents and the number of females reported by department chairs who were also surveyed about faculty in their departments. Department chairs reported 196 (12%) females out of a total of 1,619 professors (all levels).

Beyond the question of numbers, the researchers found that female professors were, on average, nine years younger than their male colleagues (44 versus 53), half as likely to be married (47% versus 91%), and less likely to be tenured. They reported that 50% of the females were tenured compared to 84% of the males, but that amongst new hires, i.e., five years or less, "while men were more likely to be tenured, the difference was not large; 14% of men . . . 12% of women (121)." And they reported that 29% of the new hires were females. While similar to their counterparts in a number of ways, the researchers found that females earned less ($10,000 less) and held rank in inverse proportion. Males held 95% of the full professorships, 82.5% of the associate professorships, and 62% of the assistant professorships. Females held 4.4% of the

full professorships, 17.5% of the associate professorships, and 38% of the assistant professorships.

Using the data generated by McCarthy, et.al (1988), Pounder (1989) examined the salary differential between male and female professors. She found gender to be a factor in the differential between female (lower) and male (higher) professors, even when rank and years of experience were factored into the analysis. On average, females earned $3,000 less than their male counterparts. Pounder also found that 80% of female assistant professors, as compared to 47% of male assistant professors, earned less than $30,000.

Short, Twale and Walden (1989) surveyed the 190 female professors of educational administration (K-12) they identified, receiving 130 usable responses. They asked some of the same questions as McCarthy, et. al (1989), but also asked questions about the respondents' experiences in graduate school, current position, including how they heard about it and whether there were other females in the department, and perceptions, of themselves and their situation. Reports of the study have tended to concentrate on the graduate school

process (Short, Twale and Walden, 1989, 1990), nevertheless, they reported, among other things, that 56% of female professors were tenured, 48% were the sole female faculty member in their department, and, in marked contrast to what was reported by McCarthy, et. al (1989), "that less than 3% of the professors in programs that prepare students for administrative positions in elementary and secondary schools are women" (2). In response to the question about how they had heard about the position they now held, 37% of the respondents checked "announcement," 35% "recruited," and 18% "sponsored," the three choices provided by the authors.

Mertz and McNeely (1990) asked the female professors identified by Short, Twale and Walden (1989) how they had gotten their first faculty position in educational administration, and what factors they saw as important to securing a position as a professor of education administration. They found that three patterns accounted for how female professors perceived they had secured their positions: brokering (62%); getting the position by their own efforts (26%); being "known" in the institution (12%). Brokering was by far

the most commonly identified method of getting the position.

Among the factors 50% or more of the females perceived as very important to getting a position as a professor of educational administration were, in rank order: a good interview (86%); "fit" with the institution (76%); area of expertise, i.e., it matched departmental need (64%); publication record (56%), although none cited their publication record as a reason for getting their position; credentials (53%); positive reports from persons contacted for confidential feedback (52%); and positive recommendations from colleagues (50%). In contrast, factors they saw as relatively unimportant in securing a position were: type of degree (65%); having a mentor (49%); teaching credentials (31%); affirmative action (26%); previous administrative experience (15%); composition of the search committee (14%); and institution granting the degree (13%).

The study raised intriguing questions about male and female professors, none the least of which was the question of the relationship between male and female professors' experiences and perceptions. Empirically,

female professors appeared to have gotten their positions in the same ways that males had traditionally gotten their positions. Was that, indeed, true? Equally intriguing, did male professors share the perceptions of female professors about factors important to securing such positions?

Reality is informed by knowledge and experience, but structured by perception. The experiences and perceptions professors have (male as well as female), frame their reality about how professors get positions in educational administration and therefore, how they guide and counsel others, e.g., doctoral students, through the process. If male and female professors have different "realities," the guidance and counseling they give to students may be different. In another way, males are the gatekeepers of the process; by their numbers and rank, if for no other reasons, they control as well as influence entrance into the administrative professoriate. It is their reality which dominates the selection and advancement process. What is that reality and how does it relate to that held by female professors?

These previously unanswered questions about the

relationship between male and female experiences and perceptions was the basis for this comparative study of male and female professors. The authors sought to gain information that would allow them to begin to answer the questions:

1. How do male and female professors of educational administration perceive they got their positions?

2. What factors do male and female professors of educational administration perceive to be important to securing positions in the administrative professoriate?

Procedures

Data from female professors of educational administration had been collected in the previous study (Mertz and McNeely, 1990). Questionnaires had been returned by 121 female professors. Questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 100 male professors of educational administration. The males were randomly drawn from a list of faculty in UCEA affiliated institutions: (1) because the list was readily available, and (2) because these institutions are in the forefront of preparing future professors of

educational administration. The questionnaire was returned by 58 male professors for a return rate of 58%.

The questionnaires sent to both female and male professors asked them to provide information about their current position and background (educational, professional), and to describe how they perceived they had secured their first professorship in educational administration (check as many strategies as applied; double check those which were most influential). In addition, they were asked to identify and rate factors they considered to be important to securing a professorship in educational administration (by any candidate) with a 1 (very important), 2 (somewhat important), or 3 (relatively unimportant). Respondents were not restricted in the number of factors to which they could assign a particular rating, and provision was made for adding (and rating) factors which were not listed, but which the respondent thought were relevant.

Data collected were analyzed in terms of the questions asked in the questionnaire and the questions guiding the study. Gender was, therefore, the critical variable of analysis. Data gathered from males

professors were analyzed and then compared to data previously gathered from female professors. Data generated for each aspect of the study, current position and background, how they got the position, and factors important to getting positions, were analyzed separately, and then in terms of professional variables, i.e., tenure, first/subsequent position in professoriate, years in professoriate, administrative experience.

Where appropriate, standard quantitative methods of analysis were used and the findings are reported in terms of numbers and percentages. Descriptive data were analyzed inductively and compared to the tabulated data for consistency and complementarity. Those findings are reported narratively in terms of patterns.

Findings

In comparing the rank of male and female respondents, males were far more likely to be full professors. Seventy-four per cent of the males were full professors, 24% were associate professors, and 24% were assistant professors; for females, 24% were full professors, 30% were associate professors, 39% were

assistant professors, 5% were adjunct, and 2% were undefined "other." Ninety-six per cent of the males were tenured versus 49% of the females. Six per cent of the females were in non-tenurable positions. None of the males were in untenurable positions. Closely related to the issues of rank and tenure was the issue of length of service. More than twice as many female as male respondents were new hires, i.e., they had five years or less in the administrative professoriate (70% of females; 34% of males).

In comparing the administrative experience male and female professors brought to the professoriate, 54% of the females versus 40% of the males came with experience in K-12 administration. It should be noted that 39% of the males who had K-12 administrative experience had been superintendents, in addition to any other positions they may have held; none of the females had been superintendents. Sixteen per cent of the females came with experience in both K-12 administration and college teaching versus 9% of males. Twenty-four per cent of females came with experience in college and/or university administration as compared to 17% of the males. Six per cent of the females came to

the professoriate with no experience in administration or college teaching. Seventeen per cent of males came with no experience in administration or college teaching, however, they, unlike the females, came from research positions in a variety of institutions, including universities. The remaining males (16%) came with administrative experience in either colleges or universities, state departments of education, the U.S. Department of Education, or organizations unrelated to education. (The categories were mutually exclusive.)

Getting a Position. The respondents, both male and female, checked a variety of strategies they had used in securing their first position as a professor of education administration; some only one, others several. When it came to those they double checked, i.e., considered most influential, the respondents checked one or two items, and clear patterns emerged from the data. These patterns accounted for all responses and were the same for females and males. They included: brokering; by their own efforts; and being known. This is not to say that the respondents relied on only one strategy; or thought that only that strategy was relevant to their getting the position,

although this was indeed the sentiment expressed by a number of respondents. Rather, the patterns represent the perceptions of the respondents about what was of most influence.

Sixty-two per cent of females versus 74% of males cited some form of brokering as important to their having gained the position. Twenty-six per cent of females versus 21% of males perceived that they had gotten the position as a result of their own efforts, i.e., without assistance. Twelve per cent of the females versus 28% of the males perceived being "known" in the institution as a critical factor in their being taken on as a professor by the institution.

Despite commonalities in patterns, there were differences between males and females within the categories. Brokering, alone or in concert with being solicited as a result of the efforts of someone who knew one's work, a form of brokering, was cited most frequently by females and males. For females, brokering by their major professor or another professor in the field, was the most important factor cited in getting their first position as a professor of educational administration (54%). Another 8% were

solicited as a result of someone in the field who knew their work and nominated/recommended them. For males, 61% cited brokering by their major professor or another professor as the most important factor in their getting the position. An additional 35% perceived they were solicited as a result of nomination/recommendation by someone in the field who knew their work. While similar (not exact) percentages of males and females cited brokering by their major professor or another professor, males cited being solicited more than four times as often as females.

Twenty-one per cent of the males perceived they had gotten their first positions by their own efforts. Within this 21%, 15.5% identified applying for an advertised position as the only factor in getting the position, and 5.5% cited applying **and** having a record of publications as factors critical to getting the position. A similar per cent of females (28%) perceived they had gotten their positions without outside assistance, i.e., by their own efforts, however their perceptions were a little different from those of the males. Nine per cent cited applying for an advertised position. None cited publications as a

factor. However, 5% cited making contacts or presentations at national meetings, a category not cited by males. Twelve per cent of the females, but none of the males, attributed their success in getting a position to luck or circumstance.

More than twice as many males as females identified being "known" as a major factor in gaining their first position as a professor of educational administration (28% versus 12%). In addition, the basis for being known was very different for males and females. Twenty-six per cent of the males, but only 3% of the females were taken on by the degree granting institution. Nine per cent of the females, versus 2% of the males, were taken on by the institution in which they were serving as adjuncts.

Selection Criteria. Both male and female professors were asked to rate the importance of various factors in securing a position as a professor of educational administration. Looking at the factors respondents considered to be very important (rated with a 1), male and female respondents were highly similar in their responses, and were much more alike than different in the things they saw as very important.

Seven factors were perceived as important in gaining a position by 50% or more of the female professors; nine factors were perceived as important in gaining a position by 50% or more of the male professors. Six of these factors were common to both, and two of the three top factors were common to both.

The seven factors cited by females were, in rank order: a good interview; "fit" with the institution; area of expertise; publication record; credentials/ knowledge of the field; positive reports from persons contacted for confidential feedback; and positive recommendations from colleagues. The nine factors cited by males were, in rank order: knowledge of the field/credentials; area of expertise; "fit" with the institution; positive reports from persons contacted for confidential feedback; interpersonal skills; a good interview; positive reports from colleagues; prior administrative experience; and teaching competency. Interestingly enough, males ranked teaching credentials and previous administrative experience as among the top factors; females did not. Males identified interpersonal skills as a major factor in selection. Interpersonal skills were not identified as a factor by

females. A list of all of the factors cited as most important by males and females, ranked by the percentage of respondents selecting that factor, appears in Table 1.

In looking at the factors the respondents considered relatively unimportant (rated a 3), type of degree was the only factor identified by 50% or more of both males and females. Males and females differed in their ranking of other factors they considered relatively unimportant and had only one in common, affirmative action. The five items most frequently selected by females, ranked in descending order, were: type of degree; having a mentor; teaching credentials; affirmative action; and previous administrative experience. The six items most frequently selected by males, ranked in descending order, were: type of degree; knowledge about the institution; prior university experience; affirmative action; record of getting grants and contracts; and involvement in professional organizations. A list of all of the factors cited by males and females as relatively unimportant, ranked by the percentage of respondents selecting that factor, appears in Table 2.

Table 1

Factors Seen as Very Important In Job Securement

Factor	Percentage of Respondents Listing This Factor*
Males	
Knowledge of the field	85
Area of Expertise	75
"Fit" with the Institution	73
Contact and Recommendation by a Peer You Know and Trust	71
Interpersonal Skills	62
Interview	60
Prior Administrative Experience	56
Reports from Former and Present Colleagues	56
Teaching Competency	51
Publication Record	45
Doctoral Granting Institution	42
Credentials	42
Contact and Recommendations by the Major Professor	38
References	31
Affirmative Action	25

(table continues)

Table 1
(Continued)

Factors Seen as Very Important In Job Securement

Factor	Percentage of Respondents Listing This Factor*
Females	
Interview	86
"Fit" with Institution	76
Area of Expertise	64
Publication Record	56
Credentials	53
Persons Contacted for Confidential Feedback	52
Reports from Colleagues	50
References	42
Institution Granting Degree	38
Previous Administrative Experience	38
Composition of Search Committee	27
Teaching Credentials	27
Affirmative Action	23
Having a Major	20
Type of Degree	10

* Percentages below 10 are not listed.

Table 2

Factors Seen as Relatively Unimportant

In Job Securement

Factor	Percentage of Respondents Listing This Factor*
Males	
Type of Degree	84
Knowledge about the Institution	51
Prior University Experience	36
Appearance	24
Involvement in Professional Organizations	22
Record of Getting Grants and Contracts	22
Affirmative Action	22
References	20
Publication Record	20
Females	
Type of Degree	65
Having a Mentor	49
Teaching Credentials	31
Affirmative Action	26
Previous Administrative Experience	15
Composition of Search Committee	14
Institution Granting Degree	13

* Percentages below 10 are not listed.

Discussion

The intent of the study was to begin to answer the questions: (1) how do male and female professors of educational administration perceive they got their first positions; and (2) what factors do they see as important to securing positions in the administrative professoriate. The results of the study are strictly limited to the males and females who responded to the questionnaires, and can not be said to represent the experiences and perceptions of all male and female professors of educational administration. Further, the two groups of respondents involved in the study differed not only in gender, but in the time in which they secured their first appointments. By and large, male respondents had been in their current positions for considerably longer periods of time, and their first appointments had been secured many years earlier. Few females had secured their first positions as long ago, although there were a few. In addition, 70% of the females were new hires, i.e., had been in the position for five years or less, compared to 34% of males. The responses of "new" males did not differ significantly from those of long-term males.

Nevertheless, time/timing has to be considered a factor in the responses, and therefore, a variable which may have "distorted" the results. Notwithstanding this critical caveat, the results come from current professors (office-holders), speak to their experiences and perceptions, and offer at least their answers to these questions. That is a beginning point for answering the questions posed by the study. Beyond this, the findings raised, but did not answer, some critical questions about gender as a factor in the administrative professoriate.

How do male and female professors perceive they got their positions? The similarities in perception were striking and "comforting," in a manner of speaking. One is reminded of the oft-quoted phrase, plus ca change . . . Little appears to have changed over the period of time represented by the respondent office-holders, and the ways old hires got their first positions as professors of educational administration appear to be the ways new hires get that position. And that is true for females as well as males.

The importance of brokering as a way--of prime importance--of getting the position, irrespective of

gender, can not be overstated. This perception fits with conventional wisdom that holds that being brokered by a professor in the field is "the way it is done." It is important for professors of educational administration to recognize the primacy of brokering, to understand the relevance to would-be professors (students) of putting themselves in positions to be brokered, and to give careful attention to the brokering they do of their students.

With respect to the brokering of male and female students, as the dominant group in terms of numbers, rank, and longevity, males are the statistically more likely brokers. Females overwhelmingly reported being brokered by male professors. Clearly, male office-holders have been important to changing the gender landscape of the educational administrative professoriate, and will continue to be in the near future. It is not to deny the importance and role of female professors in contributing to the diversification of the professoriate. Nevertheless, male professors can not "leave the problem to the female professors," expecting them to take the major role in brokering females into the professoriate.

While it is still unclear what percentage of professors of administration are female, it is clear that females are underrepresented in the professoriate and hold positions in the higher ranks in much smaller proportions. Moving to greater diversification (racial, ethnic, and gender) of the professoriate means, among other things, increasing the number of female professors. Male professors remain a critical part of that process.

The study raised unanswered, unanswerable questions about the ability of female professors to broker others into the professoriate. As might be expected, because of timing and the gender profile of the field, females overwhelmingly reported having been brokered by male professors. Indeed, it is unlikely that many female or male professors had experiences working with female professors of educational administration in their graduate programs. Thus the brokering experienced and reported was male professor to male or female student. Male professors, through their networks, appear to have linked female aspirants they knew into the network of knowns, recommending them, supporting their candidacies, and vouching for

them. Are females who now hold professorships in educational administration linked into the existing network(s), or are they outside it/them? Do females have access to the network(s) through which brokering is most likely and effectively to occur? And if they do, is brokering by females as effective as brokering by males? Do their recommendations carry the same weight as those provided by their male colleagues?

While it would be nice to say that bias and discrimination no longer exist in educational administration or the educational administrative professoriate, and to point with some pride at the changing numbers, particularly with respect to the number of females in doctoral programs in educational administration, the changes that have occurred, and are occurring, do not necessarily mean bias and discrimination have been eliminated. The narratives shared by female professors about how they got their positions provided numerous examples of bias and discrimination. Most of the bias reported was inadvertent and unconscious, as opposed to outright discrimination, e.g., being denied the position because they were female; however, it is not clear that females

would have been aware of instances in which they had been overlooked, underrated, or rejected because of their gender. The process of selecting persons for positions is far from an objective one, notwithstanding attempts to make it so and claims to the contrary. Criteria can be and are interpreted differently--by different people, with different people. The extent to which bias may operate in the selection of female faculty members is unclear. It may have little or no influence or a great deal. It may be long-lived or temporary. And this has a bearing on the question of whether female professors can broker prospective professors as effectively as male professors.

Brokering was seen as more important by males than females. Does this reflect a sense that males have greater access to such brokering? That males are more likely to be brokered by male professors? That male professors are more supportive of male aspirants? The results of the study do not allow for exploring these questions, but at least one of the findings does raise them. Males cited being solicited as a result of the efforts of someone in the field four times more often than females. What accounts for this finding? Is it a

difference in perception or are there differences in the way male and female aspirants are thought of, talked about, introduced into networks, and afforded opportunities to demonstrate their competence?

More than twice as many males as females cited being "known" as important to their success in getting their first positions; and far more males than females were taken on by the degree granting institution (28% versus 3%). Similarly, 9% of the females versus only 2% of the males got taken on as a result of becoming known through an adjunct position. What accounts for these differences? Are they a matter of time/timing or of differences in "the way it is" for males and females? Is it more difficult for females to become known and/or to be taken on by the degree granting institution? Do females have to do more to prove they are "ready" and appropriate to be professors of educational administration than males?

A small, but not insignificant per cent of females attributed their success in getting a position to luck or circumstance (12%). None of the males cited this as a factor. Females who reported this told a variety of stories and the stories suggested that the females had

been actively involved in searching for a position. Nonetheless, they saw luck or circumstance, being in the right place at the right time, serendipity, looking for a member of that racial group, et cetera, as the primary factor in their success. Is it that luck or circumstance were not factors for males or at least not perceived to be important factors? Are the differences between males and females differences in attribution or reality? Do more females than males credit luck and circumstance for their success; do more males perceive luck and circumstance to be inextricably bound up with their efforts to secure the position? Is luck and circumstance more important to females who seek positions than to males, i.e., they need more of it to make it? The results of the study raise such questions but do not answer them.

What factors do male and female professors see as important in getting a position as a professor of educational administration? Male and female professors were remarkably similar in the identification of factors they perceived to be most influential. However, there were differences between them in the relative importance they ascribed to various factors.

A higher percentage of females than males saw a good interview as very important to getting a position. Indeed, 86% of female respondents as compared to 60% of male respondents rated this factor as very important. What accounts for the relative difference in ranking of this factor by females and males? Do males and females perceive the interview process differently? Do females see the interview as a "make or break" situation, the time when they must sell themselves as individuals and people, not only as professionals? And do men view the interview process only in terms of the professional dimension?

A higher percentage of males than females (85% versus 53%) perceived credentials/knowledge of the field to be very important to getting a position. Since males are the gatekeepers in the selection process, this factor would appear to be pivotal to the acquisition of a position. What accounts for the fact that 47% of the females did not consider this factor to be very important? Is it that they do not recognize its importance, or consider it of lesser importance; or is it an indicator that females define the role of professor in a different way?

While most of the factors were all but self-explanatory, "fit" with the institution was not and is not; and it is not clear what was in the minds of the respondents as they marked this response. They agreed that "fit" was important, but there was no necessary concomitant agreement about what constitutes or makes for or should make for "fit". "Fit" with the organization is considered a critical success factor in all kinds of organizations. It is difficult to define, but there is considerable evidence that "fit" is differentially defined for males and females (Mertz, et. al, 1988; Morrison, et. al, 1987). Is "fit" defined and/or perceived differently by male and female professors? How do notions of "fit" affect the selection process? It may be important, and it is certainly interesting, to explore how males and females define, and therefore, judge fit, and given the importance of males as gatekeepers, how they apply the elusive criterion to female aspirants.

Notwithstanding the differences between male and female professors in the factors they saw as very important in getting a position as a professor of educational administration, the similarities in their

responses were far more compelling. Male and female professors appear to have similar "realities" about how one gets such a position, and it is reasonable to assume that they convey this similar reality in guiding and counseling doctoral students who seek to become professors of educational administration. As noted earlier, because of their numbers, rank, and length of service, males are the primary gatekeepers to the field. They define the criteria used and the relative importance assigned to those criteria. The fact that females professors cited factors similar to those identified by males suggests that they know, realistically, what it takes to make it into the field. In a wider sense, it is interesting to note that the criteria for selection appear to transcend differences not only in gender, experience, and timing, but in institution as well. The samples used in the study were drawn from institutions across the country. Nonetheless, the factors cited as important in the selection of professors were almost universal in nature, and may well speak to a transcendency in the culture of the field.

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